



DEPARTMENT OF  
**COMMERCE**  
COMMUNITY AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
Office of the Commissioner

*Frank H. Murkowski, Governor*  
*William C. Noll, Commissioner*

NEWS RELEASE

Commissioner Bill Noll

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[www.commerce.state.ak.us](http://www.commerce.state.ak.us)

**For Immediate Release: December 23, 2005**

**Grant available to improve Alaska's salmon quality**

(December 23, 2005) Alaska's salmon vessel owners are now offered grants to help improve the quality of their catch. This \$1 million matching grant program is a continuation of Governor Frank Murkowski's successful Fisheries Revitalization Strategy.

The Department of Commerce is pleased to announce the new grant program for capital investment that improves salmon quality aboard Alaska's salmon fishing and tendering vessels.

The Alaska Salmon Vessel Quality Upgrade Program is dedicating \$1 million in salmon revitalization funds to assist salmon harvesters and tenders across the state to make improvements to their vessels.

Commerce Commissioner Bill Noll said the improvements that help quality will ultimately result in a larger market share. "There is a growing worldwide awareness that Alaska's salmon has superior health benefits, taste and quality," said Commissioner Noll. "If Alaskans are able to ensure a consistent, top-notch product, we will continue to grow our domestic and international salmon sales."

Fisheries Adviser to the Governor Alan Austerman said according to Department of Fish and Game, the exvessel value of salmon in Alaska has increased from \$162.5 million in 2002 up to \$272.3 million in 2004. "That's a 67 percent increase in a short two years," said Austerman. "This program is a way for us to build on that success."

Labor Commissioner and Fish Cabinet member Greg O'Claray stated, "We are pleased to be able to offer these grants to small Alaskan vessel owners and operators—the men and women who are out there making it happen."



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Eligible projects include: freezers; coolers; ice machines, chutes, and accessories; hold insulation and related repairs; refrigerated sea water systems; slush bags; generators or generator upgrades related to quality improvement equipment; quality handling equipment and/or the fabrication of quality handling equipment; and insulated totes for use on the vessel.

This is a matching grant program with reimbursements made on a dollar-for-dollar basis not to exceed \$25,000. The Department will accept applications January 1 through May 1, 2006.

To obtain an application guide and form, or to learn more about the program, please visit the Department's web site at [www.commerce.state.ak.us](http://www.commerce.state.ak.us) or call Debbie McBride at (907) 465-2023.

Applicants interested in obtaining financing for their portion of the project are encouraged to contact the Department of Commerce's Division of Investments. The Division of Investments offers low interest loans under its Product Quality Improvement program. Current interest rates are approximately five percent. Visit the Division on the web at <http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/investments/pqi.cfml> Calls originating in Alaska are toll free at 1-800-478-5626.

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